

immoral, and savage invasion of Ukrainian territory. While the conflict is sadly not near its conclusion, Russia's military is on its heels after a series of humiliating defeats—a testament to the Ukrainian people's bravery, resilience, and commitment to defending their homeland.

Ukraine's success also shows that American support is working. To date, our funding has put more weapons in Ukrainian hands and more victories under their belt. Now is not the time—not the time—to take our foot off the gas when it comes to helping Ukraine. The single worst thing we can do right now is give Putin any signal that we are wavering in our commitment to defend democracy in Ukraine and around the globe.

By passing this omnibus and confirming a new ambassador, we can send President Zelenskyy back to Ukraine with the message that the Senate, the Congress, and the American people stand unequivocally behind the people of Ukraine, and we are backing that up with real dollars and real resources.

I commend President Zelenskyy for his courage. I thank him for his leadership. And I will happily join Congress in welcoming him to the Capitol later this evening.

#### OMNIBUS

Now on the omni, as we speak, Democrats and Republicans are working on the final significant achievement of a truly significant 2 years in Congress: a yearlong funding bill to avert a shutdown and keep the government working well into the next fall.

Earlier this week, the appropriators released the text of the omnibus, a bill overflowing with good news—good news for our kids, our parents, our troops, our small businesses, and more.

The Senate took the first step to passing this bill last night, voting 70 to 25 to begin debate. Note the margin, 70 to 25. That is a strong signal that both sides are keen to finish funding the government very soon.

We must finish our work before the deadline of Friday midnight, but in reality, I hope we can vote on final passage much sooner than that, even as early as tonight. There is no reason for the Senate to wait and plenty of reasons to move quickly before a potential blizzard makes travel hazardous for Members, their staff, and families right before the Christmas season. In an effort to reach final passage soon, both sides will continue negotiating a number of amendments that I hope we can begin voting on later today, but, again, that is going to require cooperation.

So I urge my colleagues not to stand in the way of moving this process forward. Nobody wants a shutdown. Nobody benefits from a shutdown. So I hope nobody here will delay this process to fund the government ASAP.

Now, as I said yesterday, this bipartisan package is chock-full of good news for our kids, our veterans, our small businesses, and even for our democracy.

For one, we will pass long-sought reforms to the Electoral Count Act after a lot of hard work from Senators MANCHIN and KLOBUCHAR and COLLINS and BLUNT and many others. The 117th Congress began under the shadow of a violent insurrection, so it is fitting that one of our final actions will be passing a bill safeguarding our elections from future dangers.

The omnibus also represents a major win for kids and parents across the country. It increases childcare assistance by 30 percent. Our childcare agencies are struggling. This 30 percent increase is a huge shot in the arm to help them. It is a massive boost for the tens of millions of families who can't afford this basic necessity. We have a shortage of workers; one of the reasons—not good childcare. This helps alleviate that situation because moms and dads who want to take care of their kids but have to go to work can't go to work unless there is adequate and good childcare.

We are also taking a temporary program that helped kids eat during the summer during COVID and making it permanent, so parents won't have to worry about their kids going hungry during a day when school is not in session.

I am also proud that we got many of the best elements of the Omnibus in this package. We will ensure new mothers on Medicaid and CHIP can have a full year of postpartum coverage. That is a great breakthrough.

We are increasing funding to train nurses and healthcare workers as well as beef up support for mental health services, which I fought for very hard. Discrimination in maternal care and at birth is a real blot on our country. That people of color have higher rates of mortality, for the moms and the kids, is a disgrace, and this goes a good way toward trying to rectify that blot on our country's pride.

There is also some other good stuff. At a time in which we are seeing a surge in union activity because workers realize that to get adequate pay, adequate benefits, a union can help them, Democrats heeded the call and broke the nearly decade long funding freeze on the NLRB.

The NLRB was one of the very few Agencies that got no increase in funding for years and years despite the increase in mission. It is a very important priority to Democrats and for working Americans because the NLRB is one of the most important pro-worker Agencies, and it has been utterly starved for resources for about a decade.

So let me say it again. Kids, parents, veterans, nurses, workers—these are just a few of the beneficiaries of our bipartisan funding package. So there is every reason in the world for the Senate to finish its work as soon as possible. No one got everything they wanted—that is how this works—but we got a lot of good things in there to help America.

I want to thank all of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle for their work. Let's finish the job today, if possible, by working together and cooperatively.

I yield the floor.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the bipartisan government funding bill before this body is imperfect but strong. It will make huge new investments in our Armed Forces, while cutting non-defense, nonveterans baseline spending in real dollars.

So let me say that again. The world's greatest military will get the funding increases that it needs, outpacing inflation. Meanwhile, nondefense, non-veterans spending will come in below the rate of inflation for a real dollar cut.

This is a debate about American security, American servicemembers, and American interests on the world stage.

Month after month, year after year, competitors such as China are methodically pouring money and planning into upgrading and modernizing their own militaries. They are constantly probing new ways to expand their military, intelligence, economic, and political reach, indirectly or directly threatening American forces and our allies' and partners' forces.

So under these perilous circumstances, cutting defense spending in real dollars, as Democrats first wanted to do, is simply not an option.

And embarking on a potentially endless cycle of continuing resolutions that give our military real dollar funding cuts because of inflation and giving Defense Department leaders no certainty whatsoever to either plan or to invest is simply not an option that we can adopt.

There is no question the bipartisan funding bill is certainly imperfect. If Senate Republicans controlled this Chamber, we would have handled the appropriations process entirely differently from top to bottom.

But given the reality of where we stand today, Senators have two options this week—just two: We either give our Armed Forces the resources and the certainty that they need, or we will deny it to them.

Finally, on a related matter, today, Members of Congress will have the opportunity to assemble in a joint meeting and hear from President Zelenskyy of Ukraine.

I look forward to welcoming President Zelenskyy to the Capitol and to hearing from the Ukrainian people's elected leader at a critical moment in their struggle for their safety and their sovereignty against Russia's unhinged aggression.

The people of Ukraine have reminded the entire free world about the meaning of sovereignty and the price of freedom. They have fought back against the invaders with inspiring bravery.